Panel Probes U.S. Dropping Of Drug Case

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A congressional committee sought yesterday to determine why the U.S. attorney in Chicago dropped prosecution of a Thai caught smuggling drugs last year because the CIA said he was working for them.

A House Subcommittee on Government Information and Individual Rights, headed by Rep. Bella S. Abzug (D-N.Y.), demanded that CIA counsel John Greaney return before the panel today with documents spelling out how Puttaporn Kramkruan, described as a Thai CIA agent, was involved in alleged smuggling of opium last year.

James R. Thompson, former U.S. attorney for the northern district of Illinois, testified he was frustrated in prosecuting the charge because the CIA refused to turn over documents which Kramkruan had first requested for his own defense.

Thompson said he finally had to recommend a filing form saying the prosecution would have to be dropped "unless the CIA can be persuaded to turn over the material we had requested from them." He said there was no other legal course and Kramkruan was released from jail and presumably had left the country.

Meanwhile, Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.) repeated a request that the Senate intelligence committee interrogate Cuban Premier Fidel Castro or some members of his staff either in Cuba or the United States regarding alleged CIA murder plots against Castro.

Goldwater referred to a statement by Castro issued Wednesday by Sen. George McGovern (D-S.D.) listing 24 "incidents" from mid-1960 until March, 1971, of alleged U.S.-inspired attempts to kill the Cuban leader or overthrow his government.

"What Senator McGovern failed to point out," Goldwater said, "is that the CIA does not have the authority to take action such as he described. Such action must be ordered by someone higher up."